Editorial
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“The innovative nature of this project results from the fact that it is being implemented in a lake environment. Projects to supply drinking water in the area had been carried out prior to this, but were not successful owing to a lack of maintenance and upkeep of equipment.

The current project takes those aspects into account and will also provide ongoing support to the beneficiaries to enable them to ownership of the facilities. […]

Another very innovative aspect of the programme is the treatment of faecal sludge in order to reuse it in agriculture.”

What stage are we at on Lake Nokoué?

Following the opening of the last site in Kinto in March, all the programme sites now offer access to water and latrines. The arrival of tanker boats to collect wastewater (see previous issue) is the only aspect that has been slightly delayed, following a change in provider. The end of the programme, originally scheduled for November 2015, has therefore been postponed to the end of May 2016. The current priority is hygiene education, which aims to change behaviours among populations that until now have used the lake water for all their needs. Lastly, a Beninese employee was recently recruited to ensure better coordination between all parties involved in the programme. Patrick Atohoun will be in France in November, when he will be visiting the Emmaus groups.

PROFILE OF... Norbert Sezonlin, facility operating officer for the So-Zounko and Vekky communes

"I have been a facility operating officer on the Lake since September 2013. Before that, I was a primary school teacher in Cotonou. This position allows me to work closer to home since I’m originally from So-Ava, which is located on the Lake. My job involves travelling on a daily basis to various sites and households to collect water consumption revenues. I am also in charge of the upkeep of the water tower and pumping at the treatment plant. I am proud to be playing an active role in this project, which benefits my entire community."
The price of water has dropped!

At their last General Assembly in mid-March, Lake Nokoué residents voted to reduce the price of water from 20 CFA francs for a 35-litre water basin to 15 CFA francs for a 37-litre basin. That covers the cost of operating and maintaining the facilities and allows for free access to latrines. Thanks to the reduction in price, average water consumption has increased by 37%. The move has enabled users to consume more water and promotes access to water for new households, while maintaining a budgetary balance.

SPOTLIGHT ON...

Hygiene education

Hygiene education is one of the final activities under the Nokoué programme and is crucial to its success. “It’s all very well installing the infrastructure, but if behaviours do not change, objectives will not be met”, explains Clémence Sessou, a sociologist in charge of hygiene education under the project.

Since 2014, a widespread awareness campaign has been initiated in various villages on Lake Nokoué. In state schools, teacher focal points have been trained in good hygiene practices and are raising awareness among pupils. Elsewhere, community focal points and women volunteers organise awareness-raising activities.

By carrying out public meetings, organised group action (women’s groups, young people’s groups, churches, etc.), home visits and waste collection activities, they are working to change behaviours among the population, focusing on various planned thematic areas*. This awareness-raising work is based on an information kit and a video. Influential local figures (the Mayor, teachers, health workers, association heads, religious leaders, etc.) also play a vital role in persuading the population to change its practices.

*Examples of thematic areas: Sanitary living conditions, water conservation and consumption, promotion of hand washing, use and maintenance of latrine blocks.

FACT FILE

32,000 people have been taught about hygiene in 6 thematic areas.

The programme will create jobs on the facilities for 167 people.

There are 8 months left of the programme, which will come to an end in May 2016.